



South Mountain Corridor Study

Citizens Advisory Team

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Date: March 30, 2006
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: District 6 Komatke Center, Learning Center Meeting Hall

CAT Members Attending:

Rock Argabright, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Laurel Arndt, Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee
Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA
Steve Boschen, Valley Forward
Clayton Danzeisen, Maricopa County Farm Bureau
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council

Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
David Lafferty, Tolleson
Bob Moss, United Dairymen of Arizona
Nathaniel Percharo, I-10/Pecos Landowners
Laurie Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
John D. Rodriguez, Lakewood HOA
Jim Strogon, Kyrene de los Lagos Elementary School
Dave Williams, Knight Transportation/AMTA

Staff and Consultants:

Jack Allen, HDR
Emily Bittner, PDG
Mike Bruder, ADOT
Matt Burdick, ADOT
Brent Cain, HDR
Kelly Cairo, GCI
Chris Clary-Lemon, HDR

Ken Davis, FHWA
Amy Edwards, HDR
Theresa Gunn, GCI
Bob Hazlett, MAG
Don Herp, COP
Mark Hollowell, ADOT
Heather Honsberger, HDR
Dean Howard, PDG

Dan Lance, ADOT
Rob Ober, PDG
Roger Roy, MAG
Ben Spargo, HDR
Steve Speth, HDR
Bill Vachon, FHWA
Michael Vinson, GRIC
Steve Wilcox, DMJM

Citizens:

Betty Beard
Dorne Ellsworth
David Fultz
Ron Javor

Jim Jochim
Sue Johnson
Jerry Leavitt
John McKinn, Jr.

Gary Nelson
Lisa Percharo
Brian Smith
Dave Swisher

Action Plan

Task/Activity	Who	When

Welcome

Theresa Gunn welcomed attendees and encouraged members of the public to review the Citizen Advisory Team handout, which includes a question and comment form. She introduced Mark Hollowell, ADOT Environmental Enhancement Group, who recently joined the project team and has assumed the responsibilities previously handled by Ralph Ellis.

Gunn noted an agenda change, which includes a presentation by Bob Hazlett, MAG, as part of the Traffic Report presentation. She called for any other additions to the agenda from the Citizens Advisory Team.

Project Update

Public Involvement Changes

Matt Burdick acknowledged the efforts of the CAT, particularly over the last six months, and explained that they would be asked for insight on their perspective regarding this process. He introduced Ron Ober and Dean Howard, both of PDG, and Heather Honsberger, HDR, who would be assuming additional duties in the future. ADOT will announce a preferred alignment in May or June of 2006, which will be communicated to the CAT just before the general announcement and will include discussion about future CAT involvement.

Follow-Up Questions

Amy Edwards addressed questions posed by CAT members at the previous meeting. She explained that only questions pertaining to the west side evaluation would be answered at this time, and that the east side questions would be held for future east side meetings. Questions and responses included:

Question: Does SMCAT follow the construction of the freeway to its completion or to a specific point before completion? **Response:** This question was answered previously by Matt Burdick.

Question: Is there a minimum distance that a school should be from a freeway? Or is there a "safe" distance in terms of air quality that a school should be from a freeway? **Response:** There are no design guidelines regarding this issue.

Question: Is the cost of the retaining wall at the W55 and Van Buren Street interchange (tank farm) accounted for? **Response:** Yes. At this stage, the cost is considered part of the contingency fund in design elements.

Question: Why such a huge economic impact of the W55 if it has always been planned for? **Response:** Economic impacts include not only what is on the land, but also what the land is zoned for. The impact is loss of what would have been built without the freeway.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Comment: There is a three-mile strip in Laveen that was recently rezoned to commercial, which will bring its owner more money in a buy out.

Question: Who would make guidelines for a minimum distance a school should be from a freeway? **Response:** Federal law would be the impetus, followed by state and agency action.

Question: We still haven't seen the changes to the numbers of employees displaced on the west side. **Response:** To the extent possible this information will be included in the matrix to be presented at the next meeting.

Draft Technical Report Summaries

Traffic/Regional Perspective

Bob Hazlett, MAG, provided regional traffic information. He reviewed a variety of growth maps, projected level-of-service maps for freeways and arterial streets for 2030, and socio-economic growth charts. Additional highlights included:

- MAG is a regional planning agency and is responsible for regional transportation planning.
- Approximately 75 percent of the land in Arizona that can be developed is currently developed.
- Commutes originating outside the county are occurring. A survey of an Ahwatukee-area Park and Ride lot showed 60 percent of vehicles using the lot were registered in Pinal County.
- Traffic projection models assume that all improvements that are part of the Regional Transportation Plan have been made.

- All build options for a South Mountain Freeway remove some traffic from surface streets in 2030, with W55 removing the most traffic.
- Evening travel times showed the most difference between no-build and build options in western and southern commutes.
- Although the best growth and population figures are used, these probably underestimate some areas of growth and do not account for all of the Pinal County growth – which will affect this region as well.
- Those with additional questions should contact MAG at 602-254-6400.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: How was the license plate survey done? How accurate is the information? **Response:** License plates numbers were noted and checked for location of registration through the Department of Motor Vehicles. This measurement is quite accurate.

Comment: MAG does not account for impact from the Gila River Indian Community in the models. However, I saw an article that GRIC is considering additional residential development. **Response:** This is a valid issue of concern. MAG consults with members, including the three Indian communities. We are looking to update these numbers in the next round of projected figures.

Question: Where is the data regarding how many people would actually drive from the Goodyear airport to Gateway? **Response:** These points were picked as examples, which show potential routes and include popular destinations and growing commerce centers.

Comment: The 2003 socio-economic data is 18 months old. That means we need to be cautious regarding economic growth as well. **Response:** This is a good point, and it is likely that we under-projected economic growth in many areas. Traffic demand may be even greater than what is shown.

Question: How would this segment of the Loop 202 serve a population area located so far west in the future? **Response:** Travel times do improve with the South Mountain Freeway build options.

Comment: If we are under-projecting, how can a South Mountain Freeway help?

Comment: A no-build could mean that something else could be built. **Response:** There is no other plan for this part of the region.

Comment: With additional growth, wouldn't delays get worse without a South Mountain Freeway? **Response:** This is very possible.

Comment: Why do we build highways with Maricopa County funds that end up serving those who live in Pinal County?

Question: I don't see a substantial time savings in the tables. **Response:** In the example shown for the evening drive times, there is less of a time savings in the northbound direction, but more significant time savings in the southbound direction.

Question: Do people really travel between the two points shown on the table? **Response:** (Several CAT members showed agreement that the table does reflect west side travel.)

Comment: I have lived here 22 years and have seen my current personal travel times from the west side to the east change significantly in the last 8-10 years. There is still congestion at 9:30 in the morning. We need to relieve the traffic in the area, and need to have a choice of freeways that we could take. I also suggest links of HOV to HOV lanes to eliminate some of the congestion caused by HOV lane drivers who must cross over several freeway lanes in order to exit to another freeway.

Response: Some HOV to HOV connections are included in the RTP.

Comment: Laveen has 15,000 people, and the City of Phoenix expects us to grow to 120,000 by 2025. A lot of our residents have jobs at Intel and other job import centers along the I-10/Chandler area.

Comment: We need to have handouts of this information. We should have the source of the data shown. The outskirts have cheaper housing rates and highest rate of foreclosure and therefore people

moving out of state. **Response:** If this is occurring it will be reflected in the land use study data. We will include the travel time graphic in the next CAT packet.

Steve Boschen invited people to pick up Valley Forward information packets.

Traffic/Project Perspective

Ben Spargo reviewed the Draft Traffic Report Summary, which includes traffic issues related to the South Mountain Freeway Study. His presentation included a review of future freeways to be built as part of the RTP, traffic usage information projected for a South Mountain Freeway, and VISSIM traffic microsimulations as projected for 2030. Additional highlights included:

- Different vehicles would utilize each of the different freeway options.
- Due to updates to the MAG model, there have been updates to the anticipated directional movements of traffic at system interchanges.
- HOV updates are also included in the updates to the MAG model.
- Traffic projections assume that all freeway and other improvements shown in the RTP have been made. This is valid for all options, including the South Mountain no-build option.
- In the evening, even eastbound I-10 traffic showed level of service (LOS) E and F. This is due to limited opportunity for improvements to the I-10/I-10 ramps and the I-10 tunnel to accommodate traffic in the future.
- In 2030, there will be a more even split of eastbound and westbound traffic movement on I-10 at 6 p.m.
- There are many ways to represent traffic information.
- Delay per vehicle is one method of showing traffic information. Delay time, within the microsimulation study area, is shown in minutes, and with smaller numbers being better. Less delay minutes merits the best ranking, which is a “1.”
- W101 ranks “1” in both the a.m. and p.m. regarding least minutes of delay per vehicle within the microsimulation study area.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: What changes would have to occur on related freeways to improve a South Mountain Freeway to a level-of-service D? **Response:** Level-of-service E/F are occurring where the SR 801 project would connect if it is built. That project would need to address ramps and auxiliary lanes for adding traffic to the South Mountain Freeway. Changes would be similar to what we are considering for this project when connecting to I-10, such as adding more lanes.

Question: So as soon as South Mountain is completed, would it be ripped up to create an interchange to SR 801? **Response:** The RTP proposes a fully directional interchange. Since the SR801 study would be completed after the South Mountain study, these improvements would be planned for during construction.

Comment: I see more traffic on the W101 alternative rather than the W55, but the MAG figures differ. **Response:** The MAG graphic shows the W55 alternative pulling the most vehicles off arterials. This figure shows total traffic, not where the traffic is being pulled from.

Question: Why would W55 pull most traffic off arterials, it seems there would be a “T-bone” effect? **Response:** The comparison here is between a no-build and build option, and shows how much traffic migrates to freeways. As far as the T-bone effect, I-10 improvements are part of a South Mountain Freeway connection at any of the western connection options.

Comment: I am concerned that once there is a T-intersection the congestion problem will remain forever.

Comment: Too many vehicles are turning east on I-10 trying to get into an already congested I-10.

Question: What about the number of people that have to cross several lanes from W55 to get to the Loop 101/Agua Fria? **Response:** Keep in mind that there are also improvements to I-10 that must occur as part of the South Mountain project by the 2030 timeline. Additional projects unrelated to South Mountain also will add new lanes to I-10.

Question: If no-build for South Mountain is selected, how can you plan an I-10 reliever without an end point? You told us that a freeway must connect to another freeway. **Response:** If there is a no-build decision on South Mountain, other studies would have to consider other logical termini and the scope of those studies would be affected. Avenida Rio Salado could be considered as a parkway. However, the concept of a Pecos Parkway was not shown feasible due to the traffic volumes anticipated.

Question: Why is there congestion on the 101 with the W71 option? **Response:** At this point in the evening, congestion which began at I-10 has already backed up on the ramps, and results in 101 congestion.

Comment: I have asked repeatedly for the I-10/Chandler numbers.

Comment: The travel time figures shown in Table 2 do not include current updates.

Question: Why is there such a drastic flop of information regarding Laveen to downtown travel times? **Response:** The updated MAG model includes additional capacity to I-10.

Comment: People need to see traffic that would be using 51st Avenue and Pecos regardless of whether there is a freeway. **Response:** The City of Phoenix provided a report to HDR today. However, street volumes and regional freeway volumes cannot be used to make a direct correlation. Additional existing traffic information on arterials is currently available on the Maricopa County website.

Comment: We were told there would be a discussion of the classification of traffic during the traffic report. I still want to know why the 169,000 count is at 51st Avenue, then we show 151,000. What happened to the 18,000?

Question: What about the truck traffic information? Do you also interview local trucking operation centers? **Response:** The 10 percent truck traffic figure is shown on page 14 of the Draft Traffic Report Summary. MAG stated that local trucking operation centers are interviewed and base the distribution of truck traffic on their driving patterns to various zones. Westbound I-10 sees the majority of truck traffic going to the Long Beach shipping port. I-17 is the I-10 hazardous cargo route through downtown Phoenix; I-8 is the designated bypass of the Phoenix area.

Comment: Trucks that stop at a Phoenix warehouse then continue to another city are actually through-traffic, but you don't count them as such. **Response:** That is not the way we model this traffic, because this traffic has a Phoenix destination.

Comment: We need to get an expert in now to address air quality concerns. This is not an east side issue. **Response:** We will come back with air quality data when we have more information from the experts. These issues are an evolving area.

Secondary and Cumulative Impacts

Jack Allen reviewed the Draft Secondary and Cumulative Impacts Summary Report. Presentation highlights included:

- An example of a secondary impact is the conversion of a land use due to freeway proximity.
- Cumulative impacts occur when impacts combine to cause another specific impact.
- Secondary and cumulative impacts are examined because they provide an increased understanding of the project.
- Both the type of impact and its severity are considered.
- Secondary and cumulative impacts are not discussed as a comparison of each of the three build alternatives. Rather, direct impacts are discussed in this manner.

- There are no exceedences of carbon monoxide for the build alternatives.
- Mobile source air toxics are under discussion; however, this issue is currently evolving. The “unknown” status means that MSATs are still being studying, and guidance is on-going. FHWA recently began to develop MSAT guidelines.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: What will happen with MSATs by the time the DEIS is published? **Response:** We will know concentrations of MSATs based on the best science currently available. We may show “unknown” for the MSATs cumulative effects category.

Comment: Agriculture will be obliterated regardless of whether there is a freeway. **Response:** The primary purpose of the Secondary and Cumulative Report is to disclose impacts, not mitigate these impacts. Also, this may be a bigger issue in other areas than in this instance.

Written Comments/Questions Submitted by the Public

Comments and questions received during the meeting are recorded here verbatim from forms received.

David Fultz, Concerned Families Along South Mountain Loop 202

1. Who authored i.e. group or company the VISSIM Software for the micro-simulation traffic flows shown at the 3/30/06 SMCAT meeting? Did a branch of government or department pay a company to develop this software?
2. HDR and MAG have shown total daily traffic flows on the three west side alignments so they must have a good idea on traffic flows at certain times of the day. What would the vehicles per minute weekdays be at 7, 8, and 9 a.m. and 4, 5, and 6 p.m. on the three alignments on the west side of South Mountain Loop 202 in the years 2006, 2010, 2020, and 2030?
3. Do the traffic and population projections MAG has shown in today’s meetings take in the effect of increasing property values and the availability and cost of water? Also, isn’t this the same group (MAG) that stated only 10% of overall traffic on this natural bypass (South Mountain Loop 202) will be truck traffic?
4. On the last west side ADOT meetings concerning the I-10 reliever, a map was shown with the points of connection from (west side) South Mountain Loop 202 to route 85. Is this the same route 85 that will be designated for an International Freight Corridor called Canamex?

CAT Member Comment Cards

Statements shown below are recorded verbatim from comment cards:

- Air quality is not just an east side issue!
- Can the MAG be programmed to show what happens if the SM Freeway only extends north to the proposed 801?
- Need I-10/Chandler current vs. projected traffic volumes.
- Why have we not broken down in more detail the vehicle usage – promised from July 2004 “daily traffic analysis on 202?”
- RE: Table 2. Why do the 2030 times in this report differ drastically from same travel times info on web?
- After all the discussion on lost property taxes, sales taxes, removal of businesses, can the draft Cumulative/Secondary report state the economic conditions is positive and moderate?

Adjourn

The next CAT meeting will be held Thursday, April 6, 2006 at 5:30 p.m. at the Learning Center Meeting Hall, Komatke Center, in District Six.